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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 4459  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1399  
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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0693  
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 1763  
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SUBJECT: PERU - EARTHQUAKE: SITUATION REPORT #1

REF: LIMA 2806

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

1. (U) Summary. As of August 19, the death toll in Peru from the August 15 earthquake, which occurred at 1840 hours local time, is 521 people. Following the August 16 U.S. Ambassador's disaster declaration for the earthquake in Peru and within 16 hours of the earthquake, the U.S. Embassy in Lima deployed a team that included representatives from the Department of State, USAID/Peru, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), and the Department of Defense (DOD)'s Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). In total, more than 50 USG personnel have been in the affected areas, conducting assessments, coordinating with the Government of Peru (GOP), providing emergency medical treatment and relief supplies, and assisting American citizens. USAID/OFDA has provided USD 300,000 through USAID/Peru for emergency relief supplies and has airlifted other relief commodities. To assist USAID/Peru in responding to the crisis, USAID/OFDA has deployed a six-person team to assess impact, identify needs, and deliver emergency assistance. DOD, through U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), is providing technical and financial assistance, particularly in the health sector. To date, total USG assistance from USAID and DOD is more than USD 1 million.

2. (SBU) The main challenges to the current humanitarian response

is the GOP's National Civil Defense Institute's (INDECI) weak information management and coordination in the receipt and delivery of relief supplies. In addition, limited information on numbers of affected persons, needs, and houses destroyed has led to a possible overestimation of damage and displacement. According to the USAID team, ongoing assessments will help refine these numbers. Despite these challenges, humanitarian assistance is reaching affected populations. Senior GOP officials, and in particular President Alan Garcia and his Ministers who are working round-the-clock in the affected region with municipal mayors and regional presidents, are seeking to address problems and working somewhat more efficiently with international donors, civil society groups, and the private sector. End summary.

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Current Situation in Affected Areas  
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13. (U) INDECI reports that as of August 19, the earthquake killed 521 in the districts of Pisco, Ica, Chincha, Canete and surrounding rural areas. The number of affected people remains unclear, with estimates still ranging between 100,000 to 200,000, which would include families who may not have lost their houses but will require food and water assistance. (Note: USAID's ongoing assessment of Pisco, Ica, Chincha, and Canete will provide more precise estimates of impact and affected population. End note.)

14. (U) The port city of Pisco is the most affected, with an estimated 85 percent of housing structures and buildings in the downtown area destroyed, according to INDECI. Most of the destroyed houses were made of adobe bricks, a common building material for that area particularly for older houses. The earthquake also

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damaged the water, sewer, electricity, and garbage collection systems. Pisco does not have electricity, water, and communications services, although the downtown plaza, which is the hub of relief operations, now has electricity. Transportation within the city has been cut off to remove debris, rubble, and hanging wires.

15. (U) The USAID assessment team reported that an estimated 40 percent of Ica's downtown area was damaged or destroyed, particularly affecting poor neighborhoods and adobe houses. Ica now has water and electricity services; however, communications are down. According to the USAID team, Chincha and Canete are not receiving relief supplies to the same level as Ica and Pisco, which were more severely damaged. (Note: The USAID assessment team will visit Chincha and Canete on August 20. End note.) The earthquake also affected provinces in Huancavelica, Ayacucho, and Junin regions.

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Challenges to the Humanitarian Response  
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16. (SBU) The main challenge to the current humanitarian response is INDECI's weak information management and coordination of the receipt and delivery of relief supplies. This situation is affecting the distribution of relief items that is coordinated with regional and municipal governments. At an August 18 coordination meeting with the humanitarian community, the GOP recognized that while relief supplies are available, the distribution system is slower than needed. The GOP requested assistance from the humanitarian community in the logistics, information management, and coordination sectors. INDECI had been collecting relief supplies in warehouses at the Peruvian Air Force base in Pisco and asking municipal and village mayors to ensure distribution to their populations. A main challenge has been that mayors did not have sufficient transportation resources or capacity to deliver goods efficiently in the initial hours and days. On August 18, the GOP established 13 distribution centers, or "albergues", in the affected districts open to the public. Affected residents will be able to receive relief items, including water, food, medicines, and shelter supplies, directly from these centers. Mayors are requesting that residents register in order to receive needed supplies. The U.N. has deployed a U.N. Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to provide

communication, information management, and logistics support to INDECI. In addition, Peruvian companies, including Microsoft Peru, are donating logistical technical assistance and resources to the GOP, according to local media reports.

¶7. (SBU) Limited information on exact numbers of affected persons, needs, and assistance distributed to date is also complicating the ongoing response. As a result, identifying unmet needs and gaps has proven to be challenging. (Note: The USAID assessment team is working in coordination with INDECI and different ministries to identify gaps and medium-term needs. End note.) The U.N. is working with the GOP and INDECI to establish an emergency operations center in Lima and in the field to serve as the coordination hub for information and logistics. (Note: USAID/OFDA has supported this effort by airlifting from Miami, Florida, an office support module for the UNDAC team, which includes all the necessary equipment to

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set up an office in the field, such as workstations, generators, tents, and office supplies. End note.) The goal is for the center to begin organizing humanitarian assistance by sector, e.g. health, shelter, water and sanitation, infrastructure, etc.

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Road Conditions  
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¶8. (U) While damage to main highways and debris on roads continues to delay transportation of relief items and access to affected areas, the Ministry of Transport, with collaboration from the Peruvian military and private Peruvian companies, is clearing the two main highways linking Lima and the affected cities. Transit time from Lima to Pisco has been cut from eight hours to approximately five hours, according to U.S. Embassy assessment teams. Chincha is now accessible from Lima in less than three hours. More importantly, roads within Ica Region are also being cleared, in particular the Ica-Pisco-Chincha road. Bottlenecks on the main highways remain due to the heavy traffic of relief supplies into the region and the outflow of residents leaving the area to stay with relatives in Lima and elsewhere. Given current road conditions, relief items are flown to the Peruvian Air Force base in Pisco. Planes carrying relief supplies are arriving from Lima and other donor countries, including Colombia and Venezuela. USG relief assistance to Pisco and Ica will continue to be airlifted depending on road conditions, while relief items to Chincha and Canete will most likely take place by road from Lima.

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Security  
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¶9. (U) Reports of assaults on vehicles transporting relief supplies along the main highways and looting in some of the affected cities, particularly on August 17, raised concerns about the potential impact to relief operations. In response, the GOP has augmented police presence at critical locations on highways, especially at night. In addition, on August 18, the GOP's Ministry of Defense deployed 1,000 troops to affected cities to guarantee peace and security, according to local media reports. The USAID/OFDA assessment team reports that insecurity has not disrupted relief efforts to date and has begun to subside.

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GOP Response  
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¶10. (U) The GOP has converted the Peruvian Air Force base in Pisco into the operations center for coordination of the relief efforts, including receipt and delivery of relief items. President Garcia and GOP ministers have been using the base as an office since August 16. From INDECI's operations center in this base, municipal mayors and regional presidents hold daily meetings with the President and GOP ministers. During these meetings, the GOP discusses needs, distribution process, and medium-term requirements. Peruvian National Police and Military units also report on the situation to the President on this site.

¶11. (U) The USAID team confirms that the GOP priority requests are water, shelter, blankets, and food, as well as heavy lifting equipment debris removal. Looking ahead, the GOP has already started a cash-for-work program through which residents are paid 14 soles per day (the equivalent of USD 4.50) for debris removal.

¶12. (U) INDECI and Peruvian firefighters have expressed great appreciation for USAID/OFDA and MAAG preparedness and capacity-building programs over the past few years. A Peruvian firefighter told the USAID team on the ground: "Somos hijos de OFDA y MAAG." (We are the children of OFDA and MAAG.) INDECI and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams also expressed similar feelings to the team.

¶13. (U) The response from Peruvian citizens and the private sector has been overwhelming. To date, Peruvian companies, municipalities, and private citizens have made significant monetary and goods donations for relief efforts. Peruvian private sector companies, including banks, mines, oil and gas, and exporting associations, have sent relief items and provided heavy machinery to lift and remove debris.

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Ongoing USG Actions and Response  
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¶14. (U) To coordinate the USG response to the disaster, a regional advisor from the USAID/OFDA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in San Jose, Costa Rica, deployed to Peru on August 16 to augment the ongoing risk and disaster mitigation efforts of three USAID/OFDA/LAC consultants already in-country. As of August 18, a six-person USAID/OFDA team, comprising the regional advisor, four LAC consultants, and an information officer, is in Peru. In collaboration with USAID/Peru, the U.S. embassy, and MAAG, the team is assessing damages, identifying needs, delivering emergency assistance, and coordinating with the GOP.

¶15. (U) On August 16, U.S. Ambassador McKinley declared a disaster due to the earthquake in Peru. In response, USAID/OFDA provided USD 100,000 through USAID/Peru for the Peruvian Red Cross to purchase relief commodities, including 1,000 blankets, 2,000 jerry cans, 450 tents, and plastic sheeting. To date, the Peruvian Red Cross has distributed 525 blankets and 180 jerrycans in Paracas, 450 blankets and 75 tents in San Andres, and 500 blankets and 50 tents in Los Molinos, Pisco District. In addition, 3,000 blankets, 500 jerrycans, and 60 tents were distributed in Los Molinos, Ica District.

¶16. (U) Based on other identified needs, USAID/OFDA is providing an additional USD 200,000 through USAID/Peru for humanitarian activities. On August 19, USAID/OFDA airlifted relief commodities from the USAID/OFDA warehouse in Miami, Florida, including four 10,000-liter water bladders; 7,800 10-liter water containers; and 500 body bags. This airlift also includes an office support module for UNDAC team, which includes all the necessary equipment to set up an office in the field, such as workstations, generators, tents, and office supplies. The total value of all the commodities including

transport is more than USD 290,000.

¶17. (U) To date, the Department of Defense (DOD) has provided approximately USD 410,000 in technical and financial assistance. DOD plans to allocate USD 1 million to cover the costs of military assistance to the overall USG response. Technical and financial assistance to date includes:

A) A U.S. medical team of 8 doctors and 10 medical students from the Naval Medical Research Center Detachment (NMRCDC), which was already on the ground on a training mission and was immediately mobilized to the affected areas, conducted assessments in conjunction with

USAID/Peru staff. NMRC D has established a portable laboratory for two weeks at the hospital in Pisco to monitor infections.

B) A 27-member Field Surgical Team (FST), including a general surgeon, anesthesiologist, general practitioners, nurses, and medical technicians, arrived in Peru on August 17 and 18 from the Joint Task Force-Bravo in Honduras. The FST treated 250 patients and conducted 3 surgeries in Pisco on August 18, its first day of operations.

C) A 13-person Medical Readiness Exercise Team (MEDRETE) from U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) is traveling to Ica on August 19 to provide general medical services, in coordination with the Ministry of Health. The MEDRETE team is bringing medical supplies valued at USD 65,000.

D) Two C-130 DOD planes airlifted a surgical operating room package and medical supplies valued at more than USD 28,000 on August 18. Transportation for these airlifts cost USD 240,000. Beginning August 19, one C-130 plane will remain in Peru to transport relief supplies in-country, at a cost of USD 25,000 per day. In addition, the C-130 has transported residents wanting to leave the affected area.

E) DOD has contributed USD 50,000 through NMRC D for the local procurement of medical and other relief supplies.

118. (U) The Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) has provided 3,000 tents and food to the Peruvian Military and the Police during their deployment to the affected areas.  
MCKINLEY